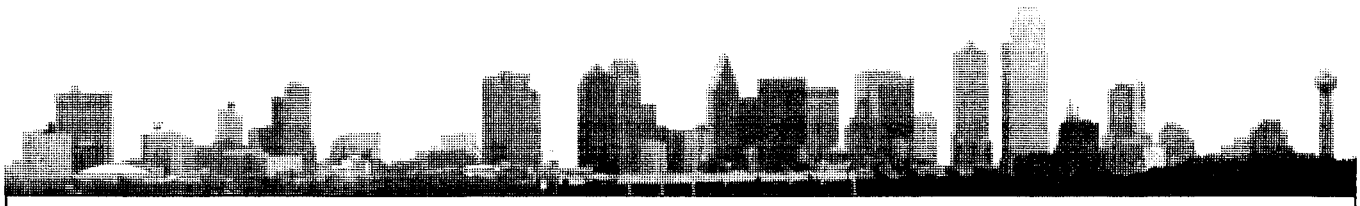
MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth Volume 13 Issue 5 — May 1995 Dallas

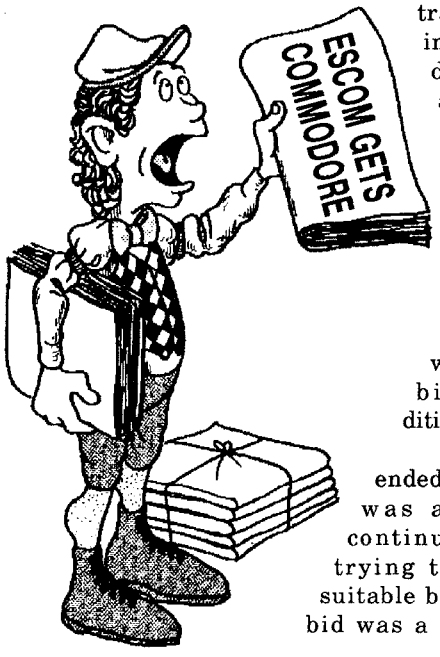
BUYOUT !

finally the deed is done — almost

The Outcome
by Joshua Galun
Editor-in-Chief of Amiga Link Magazine

Today, after 12 long months, the C= bankruptcy FINALLY ended. And, like the whole bankruptcy up to now, it was not without many problems.

In the auction on April 20, only two companies had bid, Escom and Dell. Escom was the German computer retailer, and Dell is a big American computer company. CEI, long thought to be a bidder, had thrown in their hat with Dell, so that Dell would work with CEI on the Amiga, although CEI would be the ones running the show in respects to the Amiga. Escom's bid was the starting bid of approximately 5 million dollars, as well as the money they spent on the C= trademark, approximately 1.3 million dollars. Dell made a bid at 2 PM of an undisclosed amount. However, that bid was rejected for Escom's bid, because it had conditions attached to it, whereas Escom's bid was unconditional.



After the auction ended, and Escom's bid was accepted, Dell continued to work on, trying to make a more suitable bid. Their second bid was a $15 million bid, with the condition that they be allowed a 30 day waiting period to look at the Amiga and decide if they wanted to keep it. If they decided not to keep it, they would forfeit their $1 million deposit, and the whole process of getting another bidder would have to go on again.

In the hearing on Friday, April 21, the Creditor's Commitee wanted to accept Dell/CEI's bid. However, Escom felt that was unfair, because Dell's bid was placed after Escom's bid was accepted. There was much legal wrangling, but finally, the judge asked that during the recess the parties try to work out an agreement. After 3 hours, the court re-adjurned, and Escom said that they would agree to raise their bid by $6.5 million, to 12 million dollars. Although that was less than Dell/CEI's bid of $15 million dollars, the Creditor's agreed to drop the objection to stop Escom winning the Amiga, because Dell could back out of the deal and then they'd have to go through the process again.

Escom is working with a Chinese manufacturer to make Amigas, and they said that they should have new Amigas on the market within 2 months. They have said that they are interested in upgrading the Amiga to the Power PC chip, although they have said that the future is wide open, and that no technical decisions are set in stone. They have already hired many former C= technicians and workers to work on the Amiga once again. Escom has said that they will sell Amigas in all their stores, and that they may also use the Amiga technology in other products, such as set-top boxes, as well as possibly liscencing Amiga technology to other companies interested in making Amiga clones.

Escom has sales of approximately 2 billion dollars last year.

Escom apparently wants to enter the American computer market, but felt that entering with PCs alone would be very tough, as there are already many PC retailers in America. As such, they wanted to have a new technology, such as the Amiga, to bring to American

markets. Escom has said that they will be setting up an American operation very soon.

Commodore UK did not place a bid at the auction, apparently because their backer dropped out. However, Colin Proudfoot of C= UK and Escom have both stated that in 2 weeks they will be holding talks as to Escom either liscencing Amiga technology to C= UK, or, more likely, buying C= UK.

Escom has said that they will work with Amiga developers, user groups, and the Internet to support the Amiga.

The Phillipine plant and stock in it wasn't included in the auction, but it will most likely be sold to Escom for $1 million soon, because it may actually be illegal to sell it to anyone other than Escom.

All this information is true. I was at the hearing on April 21, all 8 hours of it. I would like to thank Jason Compton, for bringing so much news to the Amiga community during the dark time of the buyout. I would also like to thank Georgio Gomelsky, for bringing me into the Commdore hearing and getting me interviews with Colin Proudfoot and the head of the Amiga operations at Escom, and the great Amiga PD/Shareware developers, who make some of the best products out there for little monetary compensation.

And finally, I'd like to thank the whole Amiga community. You guys have given me some of the best times of my life, and for that I am eternally grateful.

A Quick Summary of The Auction
from Amiga Report International Online Magazine
April 21, 1995 — Special Auction Issue

A quick breakdown, based on the best information available, of how Thursday and Friday transpired:

Thursday: Auction Day
The liquidators declare that no bids with conditions will be attached will be accepted. Alex Amor of CEI does not submit his bid based on this restriction.

Computer Connection of California submits a bid for the assets that is rejected for lack of a $1 M deposit.

Dell Computers, a US-based clone manufacturer, submits a bid for the assets that is rejected because a condition is attached.

Escom, holding the only valid bid, finds their original signed contract for $5 million accepted.

Somewhere Thursday Night:
The C= UK MBO issues a statement formally withdrawing for the running, citing the overwhelming resources of Escom and Dell.

Alex Amor and Dell form a coalition bid. (It seems that Dell's primary interest is in Commodore's patents, presumably to wage profitable lawsuits with. Alex Amor convinces them to combine bids, allowing him to rein over the Amiga.)

Friday Morning: Court Date
The objections against the sale are heards.

The IBM and Netherlands Trustees (of Commodore BV/Philippines/UK) objections are heard, but very little comes of them.

The C= US Creditor's objection is heard. The result of this was unclear.

Dell offers $15 million for the assets. The creditors, the liquidator, Dell Computers, and Judge Garrity all seem to agree that, given the unusual circumstances, a new auction should be held, perhaps on Tuesday. Escom is not in agreement.

Friday, During Lunch:
Escom ups its bid to $10 million.

Friday Afternoon: Court
The creditors announce that Escom has increased its bid to $10 million, which is acceptable to them.

The deal is approved.

[My sources indicate that Alex Amor and Dell disappeared fairly quickly after lunch.]

A Summary of Events
from Amiga Report International Online Magazine
April 21, 1995 — Special Auction Issue
By Dan Stets
Philadelphia Inquirer Staff Writer

a. Escom purchased Commodore's assets for $6.6 million yesterday during the auction.

b. A half-dozen or so companies were at the auction but only Escom and Dell Computer Company submitted bids backed by the required $1 million security deposit.

c. Dell attached some unspecified conditions to there bid and consequently it was disqualified.

d. Escom will resume manufacturing the Amiga and other Commodore products and begin to make Apple-compatible and IBM-compatible clones with the Commodore name on them. The manufacturing will be in a plant near Beijing, China.

e. Escom will attempt to produce a Commodore PowerPC. This will be manufactured in Europe.

f. Escom has no plans to resume any of Commodore's American manufacturing operations.

g. Both the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in New York City and the Supreme Court of the Bahamas must still approve the sale.

h. Both IBM and the trustee for Commodore's assets in the Netherlands, UK, and the Philippines are objecting to the sale.

i. A hearing will be held today, Friday, April 21, in U.S. Bankruptcy Court to consider the proposed sale to Escom and the objections of the above (h) creditors.

j. Since Commodore's creditors are owed more than $100 million and previous estimates of Commodore's auction value were put as high as $20 million, the creditors may have reservations about the low sale price generated by the auction.

k. A standing-room-only crowd of 65 attended the auction. Two creditors, Prudential Insurance and Microsoft were in attendance. Representatives from two Chinese electronics companies, New Star and Tietsin Trust & Investment Company also were in attendance.

l. Escom plans a joint venture with Tietsin to manufacture Commodore's products.

m. Also at the auction were representatives of Computer Connection of Stockton, California. They submitted a bid but did not include the required $1 million deposit. There bid was, therefore, disqualified.

n. CEI apparently teamed up with Dell in its unsuccessful bid.

o. The Commodore UK management buyout team withdrew before the bidding began.

p. Dell's representative at the auction, Mr. Dalton Kaye, stated that his company had not yet given up its attempt to purchase Commodore. He further stated that he was not aware until two (2) weeks ago about the auction and had insufficient time to evaluate either the bid documents or Commodore's assets.

In its latest fiscal year (which ended in January), Dell's sales rose 21 percent to $3.5 billion and profits rose to $149 million.

q. The amount of Dell's bid and the amount of the bid made by Computer Connection were not made public. The conditions which Dell attached to their bid were also not made public. ✓

Interview!

Bernard van Tienen of ESCOM

interview by Josh Galun (JG) and Giorgio Gomelsky (GG) as published in Amiga Report International Online Magazine — April 21, 1995

JG: How much can you say about your plans for the Amiga?

BvT: We are setting up a group of advisors to advice us which products we should produce and we are digging into every product solutions — not only Amigas but other products like Commodore products, TV set-top boxes, we are considering PowerPCs with Amiga, we are considering everything at the moment.

JG: How soon do you think you'll be able to have Amigas in production?

BvT: We haven't decided yet, but we have all the links with the factories. Escom is a big European group at the moment, we assemble our own machines, we have all the contacts with the manufacturers, we spoke already with them, the only thing is which product should we produce, which quality an then we get started. We presume we'll have the first products, the first Amiga products on the market within 3 months...

JG: As I understand it, ESCOM is one of the biggest computer-sellers in Europe, I assume Amigas will be in all their stores, is that true?

BvT: Not only Amigas but we will also produce Commodore PCs, ja, and of course we will use our own stores in Europe but besides that we will distribute products into other countries and also to other dealers in Europe...

JG: The Amiga has a very vibrant community as well as many public domain programmers, do you plan to use them or contact them and ask them what they think...

BvT: Of course, of course, ja...

JG: With the developers as well?

BvT: Ja, ja, everybody will be involved...as many as possible to advise us on the Commodore and Amiga products...

JG: Do you plan to attempt to hire any of the technicians who used to be with Commodore?

BvT: Of course, we are already busy with it and already have some contracts. But a lot of Commodoore people are

already working for ESCOM, for instance I was vice-president of Commodore International, Peter Tachenko... I think there are already roughly 100 ex-Commodore people working for ESCOM at the moment.

JG: Do you have a position on whether you would license the Amiga technology and software to clone-makers?

BvT: Not only to clone makers but also to people who want to produce products and need some of our licences. We are already busy with that, we've made some principal contacts, ja, on that.

JG: How long have you been working to try and buy what was left of Commodore?

BvT: We started with it, let's see, last year in August.

JG: Had ESCOM been interested in the Amiga before the buy-out, in having Amigas in their stores?

BvT: The point is that ESCOM. ...must have lasted 3/4 years. We sold Amigas in the past in our stores...

GG: You are aware that the Amiga has a tremendously loyal following?

BvT: We know Commodore very well because I was vice-president of Commodore International and I know everybody and everything about C= of course...

GG: Do you intend to use this energy that comes from the passion of the Amiga users?

BvT: Of course, of course, the biggest asset is not only the name and the products but also the user-groups. There are millions of Amiga users and even more 64 users still, ja. We are also planning to roll out products in China and other countries...

GG: How would you achieve this contact with the users? Would you put up a site on the Internet?

BvT: We haven't decided yet but everything is possible. Also we would use the magazines of course, there are hundreds of magazines, so ok, we haven't got the deal yet, but as you heard in the court now it looks like we'll get the deal in a couple of weeks, we have planned a lot but now we'll be able to roll it out, ja? So give us some time, ja, we'll consider everything...

GG: Could the users be in touch with you, say over the next month or so and communicate their concern?

BvT: Ja, we will install people everywhere, in Europe, in the States. Call me and I will tell you who and where they are. We are aware of the frustrations users had under the old management...

JG: Do you have any plans already in place or being discussed with CEI about working with them on the Amiga?

BvT: We can't disclose that at the moment.

JG: Was C= UK part of the buy-out?

BvT (pointing at Colin Proudfoot passing by): That's C= UK... "Ok, Colin, see you next week, ok?" It's not part of the deal at the moment, but next week we have an apoointment with C= to see what we can do with them. We are talking with them...

JG: Do you have plans to work with them or to possibly buy them out?

BvT: Both are possible...

GG: My main concern is for the users, this has been a long slog.

BvT: Yes, I think it is a good thing that finally there is this sale. We already wanted to buy last year, but we couldn't proceed, we couldn't hurry it up, ja, it took so long.

JG: Can I ask you a bit of a personal question? Do you own an Amiga yourself? Which one"

BvT: I don't own an Amiga at the moment...

JG (smiling): But you're planning on getting one, yeah?

BvT: I,I,I..I've used Amiga in the past, ja, in my office. I'll get a new one that's coming out, we don't know what spec it will be, we are working on it hard at the moment...

JG: Do you have any plans to have some online chats on the Internet? Do make more use of the Internet?

BvT: Of course the Internet is going around right now, it's very popular in the States, also booming right now in Europe, so ja, something will happen... We will set up support groups to get to know what is going on all over the place.

JG: Do you plan to make separate Amiga packages with software bundles, let's say a Modem Package, a Game Package, as C= UK has done in the past?

BvT: It worked very well out in the UK, I know the figures because I was involved and everything is possible...but we can also bring out other products under the Amiga name, ja, we can also bring other technology into the Amiga, if you want, ja, we haven't defined it yet but we are considering everything and we expect a lot from Commodore and Amiga, otherwise we wouldn't have bought it, ja? ✓

Windows 95

new windows version set to blow away all other operating systems

by Kevin Hisel, CUCUG

With the imminent debut of "Windows 95", I thought I would share with you all of the keen, new features that PC users will soon begin to enjoy for the first time. If you've been following the story, you probably remember that "Chicago" (the working name for Microsoft's new personal operating system) was changed to "Windows 95" with a spring '95 release in mind. Soon after that, the dreaded Intel Pentium Bug was discovered by the press and the Pentium became the media's favorite electronic whipping boy. The effect of this story on Microsoft must have been significant. A few weeks later, they announced that Windows 95 wouldn't be released until August just to make sure the bugs (primarily hardware compatibility issues) are stomped out. In the meantime, over 20,000 users now (legally!) have beta copies and the Washington-state software giant sponsors "install parties" where users bring their PCs for installation compatibility testing. You've got to give Bill and the gang credit for getting serious about this program.

I'm getting off the track. I want to tell you about all the new, super-cool, state-of-the-art, absolutely blow-your-socks-off features that Windows users will be savoring when "95" finally gets the nod. Amiga users will only gaze jealously from afar at all of the slick innovations of Windows 95 that Microsoft has sunk billions into developing.

First (and best!) is something called "Preemptive Multitasking." Now, PC users will be able to RUN MORE THAN ONE PROGRAM AT A TIME without the herky-jerky starts and stops normally associated with attempting such outrageous behavior with Windows 3.1. Another highly touted feature is some wild-eyed thing called "Multithreading." This allows an application to actually — and you're just NOT going to believe THIS — DO TWO THINGS AT ONCE! Quite an awesome achievement, I'd say. The only thing that takes just a little wind out of their sails is that the Amiga was doing this ten years ago. Minor detail, let's move on.

Most computer users want to know that their operating system is powerful and loaded with features. What's the best way to tell at a glance how mighty a computer program is? Easy...just see how big it is and how much RAM it requires! Windows 95 is going to be the 300-pound gorilla of personal operating systems! You'll need to set aside 20-30 megabytes of hard drive space *[Editor's note: This is actually closer to 75 meg according to MCCC's Scott Lamb who is one of the current batch of 20,000 beta testers.]* and have a minimum of four (and probably closer to eight!) megabytes of RAM just to run this beast. Now that's POWER! The tiny Amiga OS only needs about a tenth of that. I'm not sure what the Amiga lacks, but it must be missing a lot since it's so small compared to Windows 95. I have an Amiga with only 512K of RAM and a 20M (total!) hard drive and it still runs must stuff. AmigaDOS must be a bare-bones OS with no features at all compared to Windows 95!

Wait until you read about one of the coolest, newest features those geniuses at Microsoft have discovered! Subdirectories. That's right! Now you can actually place a program group (they're "drawers" on the Amiga) INSIDE ANOTHER PROGRAM GROUP! Wow, imagine not having to scroll the Program Manager ("Workbench" to us Amiga losers) screen up and down with 196 little icons on it. Now your Windows drawers can have a "nested" and "hierarchical" structure. It's new and heavy stuff to figure out, but if you get lost, highly paid PC consultants are available to help you.

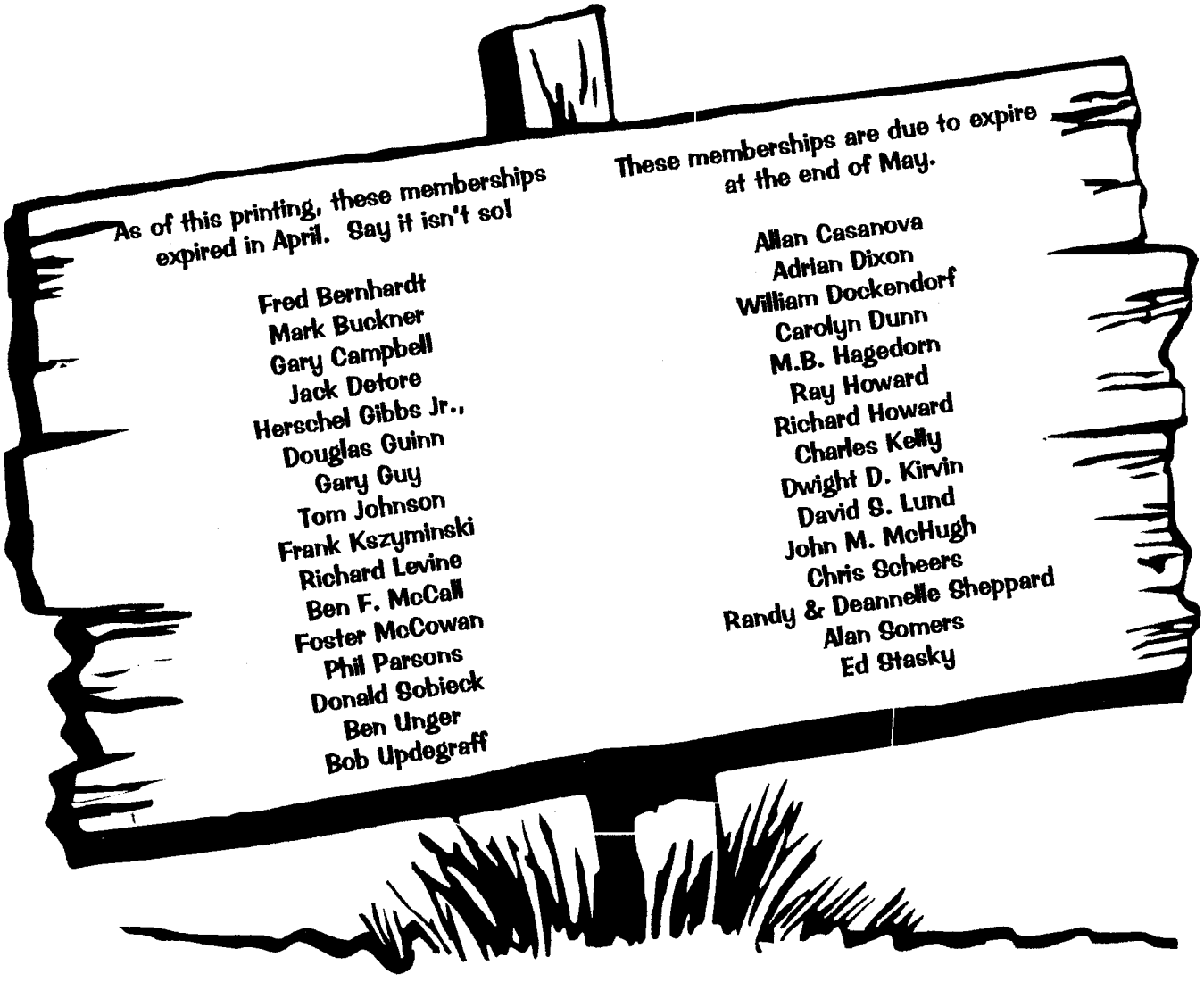
And if that wasn't enough to give you goose flesh — I hope that you are sitting down when I tell you that — for the first time, Windows users can press the right mouse button and get a menu. Let me repeat that just so you understand it clearly: press the right mouse button to get a menu. EUREKA!! Why didn't I think of that?! I could be a Microsoft Millionaire if only I were that creative.

Another exciting development will be unveiled in Windows 95: a trash icon! Now users can simply drag and drop applications into a specialized icon that seems to delete them, but surprise...they're really still there in case you made a mistake. It doesn't matter that other platforms have had this feature for years and that nobody uses it. Right in step with the zeitgeist, Microsoft named their trash icon "Recycle Bin" so users will feel that they HAVE to use it for the sake of the environment and will feel guilt and shame otherwise.

Long file names. You read it right. Now PC users can name their files just about anything they want and aren't stuck with eight-character names like "BIZREP92.WKS" or "LT2MOM04.WRI." This is truly an astonishing development that will surely set the computing community on its ear!

Add all that up and include this remarkable, new idea: plug in a card or another peripheral, and the computer recognizes it at the hardware level! "Plug and Play" is a totally new concept where there will be a "standard" of some sort that will allow you to add components to your system without knowledge of Interrupt Request Lines, Base I/O Port Addresses, Device Contention, etc. Peripherals that support this new philosophy will be available Real Soon Now.

Sadly, the moral of the story is that the Amiga has finally been eclipsed by a significantly advanced technology. Windows 95 will take the personal computer user to a new level of blissful computing rapture and ecstasy. ✓



Thoughts for the Month

Hypochondria is the one disease I don't have . . .

●

"Just the same," exclaimed Noah's wife, "I'd feel much safer if those two termites were locked up in a metal box."

●

If at first you don't succeed, forget skydiving.

●

If at first you do succeed, try not to look surprised.

●

Q: What has foor legs and one arm? A: A Pit Bull.

Amiga Library News

public domain and shareware picks from Bill Raecke

Xoper 2.5 by Werner Gunther & Gunther Nikl

There are a lot of utilities for snooping around in your system. In my (humble) opinion, *Xoper* is the best. Its interface is a little non-standard and it requires you to use the keyboard more than most, but in return you get information that isn't available with other system monitors. I think the thing I like best is its ability to show the CPU's percentage of use. Not only is the total shown, but each task is also shown in relation to the total CPU power available. Sure helps when you'd like to find out just where all your power has gone. And, for the brave, you're allowed to change things on the fly. It's on MCCC-A_847.

DeliTracker II by Delirium Softdesign

There are a lot of Tracker music players out there. *DeliTracker II* is one of the very best. My personal favorite is still *MultiTracker*, but *DeliTracker II* runs it a close second. It will play just about any tune you feed it, it has a nice interface, and it has just about all the features you could desire. If you're looking for a good music player, check it out! It's on MCCC-A_849. By the way, this one is distributed in archived format because it's big. Better have a hard drive 'cause it won't fit on a floppy.

Sound Bites from David Crumpton

This is the month for sound clips. MCCC's own David Crumpton has been busy capturing sound clips from some of Hollywood's funniest movies. On MCCC-A_853 is a collection of sounds from The Three Stooges. On MCCC-A_858, 859 and 860 is a collection from "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation." Also on MCCC-A_860, and continuing on to MCCC-A_861 and 862, you'll find some clips from Mel Brooks' "Young Frankenstein." Mel Brooks' "Blazing Saddles" hasn't been left out either. It's represented on MCCC-A_865. Thanks, David, for the "nyuks."

MIndicator 2.3 by Andreas Baum

MIndicator is a replacement for *AmigaGuide*. It's what I use in my system all the time. In fact, it's what I use for a standard text reader. Why? Well, 'cause... 'Cause it adds a file requester. 'Cause it will not only replace *AmigaGuide*, but whatever you are using as a standard text reader AND whatever you are using as a HEX reader as well. And 'cause it will read PowerPacked files automatically, without your having to de-crunch them first. I highly recommend this one. Your system shouldn't be without it. Look for it on MCCC-A_854.

PageStream 3.0g from SoftLogik

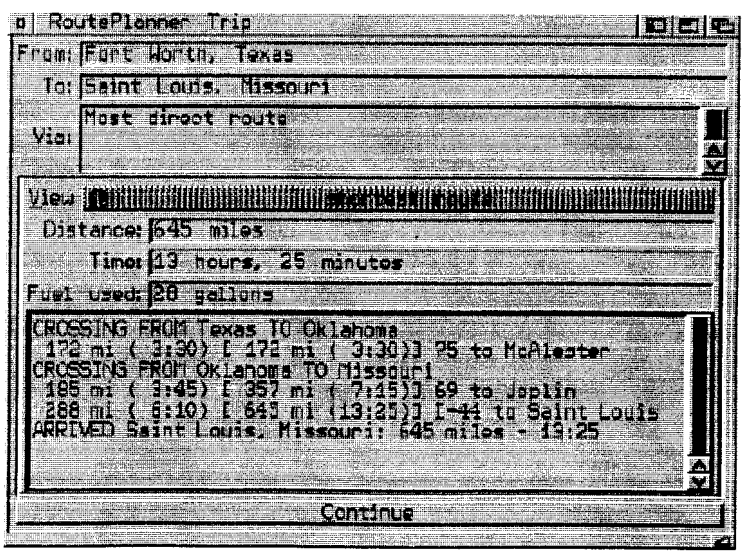
Nope, this isn't the program, just the upgrade. This one fixes some rather serious bugs that were inadvertently left in *PageStream 3.0f*. It's distributed in archived format (because of those small floppies) on MCCC-A_856.

Poing 3 by Paul van der Valk

If you're looking for games, *Poing 3* is one you have to have. It's relatively small and it's quite addictive. It's nothing more than a sideways-scrolling "Breakout" game, but it's very nicely done. You'll find it on this month's disks on MCCC-A_856.

RoutePlanner by Chris Lawrence

Planning on taking a trip? On MCCC-A_858 (in archived format) you'll find a program that could help. Give it a starting point and a destination and it will tell you the route to take that's the shortest distance between the two cities. Want to take a side trip — or want to make sure you go through a particular city or cities? Just tell it the intermediate cities you want to hit, and it will show you what roads to take to get you where you want to go. The roads to take are listed, as are the beginning and ending city for each road — so you know where to look for the turn-off. And the total mileage is calculated for you as well, as is an estimated time for the trip, based on standard speed limits. (These can be modified if you have a heavy foot.) The whole program has a very nice Intuition driven interface. I ran it through its paces on a couple of routes I was familiar with. It came up with exactly the correct answers. I installed it on my hard drive. This one gets my highest recommendation. ✓



CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga By-The-Loop

Johnny Kitchens

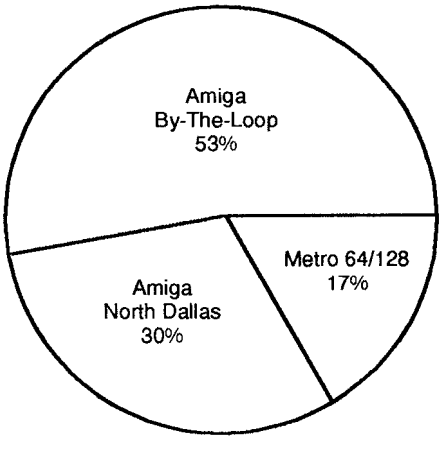
By the time you read this, the anniversary of the day that Commodore ended operations will have come and gone. April 29th will be a footnote in history of the computer, but hopefully not the last thought for the Amiga. Hopefully by the time you read this the auction will be over. It is scheduled for April 20th. Then maybe we can celebrate a new beginning for the Amiga.

Tonight's meeting started a little late, but the 26 people in attendance weren't disappointed. David Owens starts the meeting, by allowing Ned Kelly to tell us of the future of METCOM 95. It will be on September 30th this year. That's good news! The bad news is that there may be a parking charge this year. David informed us of a possible class on the Internet coming up soon. Ned, in his position as librarian, informed us that we had 13 new disks for the month. All of this led to our questions and answers session.

Someone asked about *Amazing Computing*, the magazine. Seems no one had received theirs as of yet. Strangely enough, it had just appeared on the news stand!. Someone explained how to fix a problem with *KingFisher*, the database for the Fred Fish collection. It's now up to version 2.9 and is available both on the BBS and the library. Someone had a problem with *SuperView*, and someone suggested *FastView* as an alternative. We heard next about a CEI conference coming up soon for dealers. There was question on *Directory OPUS* and an icon problem. That would be answered later. Someone had an ARexx problem, and it was taken care of quite easily. The big question of the night, was about LZX versus LHA. LZX is the new kid on the block in archive compression programs. Some appear to be having problems getting its faster speed and better compression to show up on their systems. Hopefully they understand it a little better now. Someone asked about the availability of high density drives for the Amiga. We are bound to see shortages on everything during the next few months. Someone asked about a good recommendation for a monitor repair place. Hopefully he got one. Someone asked about the new *Deluxe Paint V*. Has anyone used it?

Next we moved into our main presentation, *Directory OPUS*. A new version of *Directory OPUS* is about to hit the market, so tonight we were given an overview of the present version. Harold Williams once again lugged his machine out of the warm confines of his home to our meeting, to allow us to view the wonders hidden in this piece of software. Trying to use the Amiga without a directory utility is like a step back in time. It reminds me how hard it was to do simple things like copy files or view pictures. The directory utility has evolved into its own world for the user to step into, to do just about everything with files — automatically in most cases. Harold came prepared to show us a lot tonight, and did! Sometimes it's too bad we don't have more time for these meetings. Harold had papers printed up to show us ARexx scripts that can work with *Directory OPUS* to automate many functions. If that wasn't enough, he had disk to pass out so everyone could get their own copies of these scripts. If that wasn't reason enough to come, I don't know what else to say to entice you to come to our meetings! We were also shown the configuration and setup abilities of the program. All of those options virtually guarantee than most *Directory OPUS* setups won't look the same. The number of variations are incredible. After using several directory utilities on the Amiga, one thing always pops up when I use a PC. How the heck do they get along with that file manager program? After the presentation we gave away some door prizes! Free scripts, free disk, a great presentation, and door prizes. How much more of a reason do you need to come?

Well, that's it for this month. Come on out to our next meeting, May 9th.



C64/128 Users

Brenda Sessums

Oya, C-64/128 Users! Close to 20 people surfed into our April meeting to learn how to get on the Information Superhighway. Seems like every time you turn around, someone is talking about the internet. You know, that world-wide BBS? There has been material on KRLD radio, KERA TV, almost every computer magazine (including *Commodore World*), and even *Popular Mechanics*! In the past few months, even special "Net" magazines have popped up. I guess it was only a matter of time before it seeped into our own corner of the world.

Well, Phil Heberer and Mike Sessums gave us a great Internet demonstration, and they obviously put in some hard work to gather all the information and programs we

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needed to get started. While some of us left the meeting in a fog of net addresses and protocol, others latched onto it like a kid on a bike with training wheels. Nonetheless, we all had a lot of fun.

First off, to get on the Internet, or a local BBS (electronic bulletin board service) such as MCCC or Digital Effects, you need four things: a computer (lucky you, I bet you already have one!), a phone (you probably have one of those, too!), software (our library has that), and a modem. A what? A M*O*D*E*M. For you techies, that is short for modulater-demodulater. Ok, calm down. You don't have to remember that. There won't be a test. Just remember a modem is a little box that connects between your computer and your phone to let your computer talk to other computers — whether they are around the block or around the world. Commodore Country and similar suppliers have special modems specifically for our computers. If you get an RS-232 interface such as the "Swiftlink" cartridge, you can use practically any modem — even those fancy ones the Amigas, IBMs and Macs use!

I use an Omnitronix Deluxe RS-232 Interface cartridge with a SupraFAXModem 9600 on my 128. Phil uses a Linelink 14.4 (14,000 bps) fax modem with an interface cartridge on his 128. Mike has a Magnum 14.4 fax modem with an interface cartridge on his SX-64. Mike and Phil got theirs from Mac Warehouse for $99. I bought mine from Phil. The important thing to remember when you buy a modem is to make sure it is "Hayes Compatible" or that it is "Licensed by Hayes." Yes, this one you must remember. It assures that you have an industry standard modem and will have minimal problems, if any, when you go on your modem travels.

You really need a modem that can do at least 2400 baud. That means it can scoot 2400 little "bits" per second (bps) of data back and forth over your phone line. Ok, I hear some of you hyperventilating out there. Stop it! You don't have to know this either. All you have to know is that the higher the number, the faster you can get games, files and information into your computer. That may not seem important, but it is if you're on long-distance, or if you are on a service such as "Compuserve" that charges for each minute you are connected to their computers. What might take you 15 minutes to download (get a file) from a BBS at 2400 could take an hour or more at 300. Ouch!

For the presentation, Phil prepared special "telecommunications" disks which included: terminal (modem) programs, mail readers, program unpackers, as well as a few other necessary items. Two great Internet help booklets were also included on the disks: "Zen and the Art of Internet" — a basic guide to the Internet; and "Accessing the Internet by E-Mail" by "Dr. Bob" Rankin, a columnist for "Boardwatch" magazine. Dr. Bob's booklet tells you how to use almost all of the Internet features even if you only have an Internet E-Mail account such as with Chrysalis. If you missed getting your own copy of these disks, don't fret. Phil has made these two different disk sets available as part of our regular club library. Be sure to ask for the C-64 disk set, or the 128 disk set. They both have the same type of programs and information on them, but you'll need the set that's right for your own computer.

Mike and Phil gave us some helpful handout booklets. "The Internet Connection for Commodore and Amiga Users" was very professionally produced. It is a real "keep by the modem" guide. This booklet was organized with important questions like "What is a modem?", "What can I do with a modem?", and "What is the Internet?". It also described the three types of Internet connections: Internet E-Mail Gateway (e.g., Chrysalis), Real-Time Internet Gateway (e.g., Delphi), and Direct Internet Link (e.g., DFW Net). The actual demonstration only covered the first two, since the C-64/128 community can't use the latter — yet. Reports are that more programs are on the way to let us make direct connections, too!

There was other great information in "The Internet Connection". The Internet service provider comparison shows who offers what types of services and for how much. Usenet newsgroups (special interest mail groups — for females, too!) and E-mail servers specifically catering to Commodore users could be found under "Special Addresses and Newsgroups." There was also an explanation of Internet addresses, and a list of books and magazines for finding more information about the Internet and using BBSs. The definitions list should come in handy when some of those silly net words pop up. Some of

CHAPTER NEWS

the software included on the Telecommunications disks were listed in a "recommended software" chart that showed on which computer each worked. Another handout, included a FAQ (Frequently Asked Question) which showed a list of Commodore mailing lists to join. Two other printouts they had available for inspection was the latest copy of the "Original Dallas Fort Worth BBS List", and "Sanctum's Internet Guide." Both are available from the Second Sanctum BBS at 817-467-1175 as "DFW.ZIP" for free.

Since our meeting place doesn't have a phone connection, Mike prepared a video of pre-recorded Internet sessions with Chrysalis and Delphi. But before those got started, there was a humorous slide-show detailing what is needed to get connected, what you can do on the Internet, and who uses the net. However, that housewife Mike showed looked strangely like Elvira! The two big differences we could see between an Internet E-Mail connection on Chrysalis and a real-time Internet connection on Delphi were the cost and the speed of replies. Practically everything you could do on Delphi you could do on Internet E-Mail, only with Delphi you could get it right then, but for a higher monthly fee. The individual mail messages you send out don't cost anything extra on services such as Chrysalis. (I think Compuserve charges extra after you send/receive a certain number of messages.)

We "surfed" the net and saw how to search for files using a keyword search with "Archie" and a menu-driven search with "Gopher." Using tips from "Accessing the Internet by E-Mail," Mike showed us how to use FTP (File Transfer Protocol) to get the files we found. We used Gopher to locate the "Congressional E-Mail Addresses," and then sent a mail message to Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison to show Mike's view on the importance of supporting public television, education and the arts. (This political statement may or may not be endorsed by the management!) We learned that an Off-Line Reader (OLR) is a program that lets you read your E-mail while off-line (not connected). First you use a terminal program, such as DesTerm, to download your E-mail. Then you log off of your service provider, such as Chrysalis, and read your mail at your leisure. You can go get a cup of coffee or a Dr Pepper, go shopping, or whatever, and then go back to reading your mail with your mail reader, such as QWKR128. You can write replies or prepare mail for sending to your friend's Internet address, and then upload the messages as a file to your service provider or BBS later.

Mike said you can even "talk" over the Internet using something called IRC, Internet Relay Chat. The Ham guys know about relays. Essentially, you get on to your local BBS or service provider and your message is "relayed" from one computer system to another until it reaches who you want to talk with. This is all in a matter of seconds. If you've ever "chatted" on a BBS, or on a CB for that matter, it is just like that, except you may be talking real-time to someone in Australia on a chat group called "g-day-mate."

"And now for something completely different..." Things started getting kind of silly when Mike showed us what it was like connecting to the Monty Python home page on the Web with Delphi. The Web is another huge network connected to the Internet. A home page is sort of like a table of contents in a book, giving you several options to choose from. Mike selected "sketches" and we proceeded to a totally absurd comedic script called "The Argument." Monty Python fans will recognize this one. For the rest of us, it was just a fun little journey on the net. We all had a good laugh.

Some final words and tips on getting connected. You can't break anything, or cause an international crisis if you mess up on the net. The best way to learn is just to get out there and get your feet wet. An Internet E-Mail connection is a cheap way to try it out. Some Internet providers such as Delphi will even give you something like 10 free hours to try out their service, including the Internet That way, you can see what it is like to surf live. This may sound silly, but make sure your modem is turned on, and plugged in. (Hmmm...sound like a speech from the '60s?) Also, make sure your phone is on the hook. Don't be silly and try to make a phone call on the same phone line you are using on an active surfing session! Gee, I wonder who would do that? Also, the programs on the communications disks will also allow you to just get onto a local BBS such as MCCC or Digital Effects. Digital Effects now is carrying the Commodore Usenet newsgroups. If you decide to connect with an E-Mail Internet gateway and your service provider or BBS doesn't have the newsgroups you want, such as is the problem with Chrysalis, you can still get the newsgroup postings by E-mail. "Accessing the Internet by E-Mail" tells you how.

Be sure to thank Phil and Mike for the great work, if you haven't already. Also, if you have any problems connecting to the Internet or to a local BBS, or with using your modem, or with understanding any of this, call Phil or Mike. Not me!

We were all so hungry by the time the demo was over, since we didn't have any of those luscious home-baked goods from the famous Terry Wright. Many lucky winners got to fill up on fabulous door prizes donated by Commodore Country. The door prizes were won so fast and furious this month that I didn't get a chance to write them down!

See y'all at the next meeting!

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff: The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership: Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are $24 per year or $15 for six months. and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional $12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information: Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising: The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (prepaid consecutive three months): Full Page — $36 ($96); Half Page — $18 ($48); Quarter Page — $12 ($32); Business Card — $6 ($16). Materials to be inserted will cost $.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles may be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga *excellence!*, *ProWrite*, *WordPerfect* or *Final Writer* format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as IFF files, DR2D, *PageStream* or *Art Expressions* structured drawings, *Professional Draw* clips or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News are available at $1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

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Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Tuesday	MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Saturday	Metro C-64/128 Chapter
3rd Tuesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 2 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

May 9 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

May 13 Metro C-64/128 Chapter
1:30 pm — UNT Health Sciences Building
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

May 16 Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas

June 6 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

June Newsletter Deadline — 7am, May 27

These Dealers offer discounts to MCCC members
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